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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
EA-10 FRB-03 INR-10 IO-13 NEA-10 NSAE-00 USIA-06
OPIC-03 SP-02 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 AGRE-00
OMB-01 SS-15 /105 W
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R 230129Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7155
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 06193

USOECD

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OECD, NATO, EEC
SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS IN THE OECD CONTEXT

REF: STATE 38167

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THIS MISSION HAS BEEN WRESTLING WITH THE PROBLEM POSED IN REFTEL FOR MANY YEARS. THE FULL CATALOGUE OF THE FORUMS FOR CONSULTATION IN THE OECD CONTEXT IS WELL KNOWN TO THE DEPARTMENT. OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S STUDY CAN BEST BE IN THE FORM OF THE FOLLOWING GENERALIZATIONS FROM OUR EXPERIENCE.

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2. FIRST, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE RESTRICTED FORUMS. INCREASINGLY THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY ISSUES ARE BEING HANDLED IN SMALL FORMAL AND INFORMAL GROUPS CONSISTING OF THE KEY POLICY OFFICIALS OF THE LARGER COUNTRIES. REAL BUSINESS CAN BE AND IS CONDUCTED IN SUCH SMALL GROUPS, WHERE WELL-FOCUSSED INTERCHANGES TAKE PLACE ON SPECIFIC ISSUES IN WAYS

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WHICH LEAD TO MODIFICATIONS IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY VIEWPOINTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONVERGENCIES MUCH MORE RAPIDLY THAN IN LARGE GROUPINGS.

3. SECOND, WITHIN OECD THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH RESTRICTED GROUPS -- E.G. THE INFORMAL EPC AND XCSS BUREAUS -- HAS ACQUIRED CONSIDERABLE DE FACTO ACCEPTANCE. THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THESE GROUPS AND THE SECRETARIAT HAVE BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO PUT THE NON-PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES IN THE POSITION OF HAVING FORMALLY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXISTENCE OF THE GROUPS. THE SMALL COUNTRIES HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF THEIR EXISTENCE, PROBABLY IN LARGE PART BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT FELT EXCLUDED FROM THE WORK. DISCUSSIONS IN RESTRICTED BUREAUS ARE REFLECTED IN PLENARY MEETINGS, WHERE THE LARGER COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO BE REPRESENTED (AND THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT) BY SENIOR OFFICIALS, GIVING THE SMALLER COUNTRIES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SERIOUS AND EFFECTIVE INTERCHANGE AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITY OF REGISTERING DISSENTS OR OF ASSOCIATING THEMSELVES WITH A CONSENSUS. THE ESSENTIAL POINT IS THAT THE SMALLER COUNTRIES MUST NOT PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS BEING COMPLETELY CUT OUT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF CONSIDERING THE ISSUES. ON THIS BASIS THE ORGANIZATION HAS IN FACT MOVED QUITE EASILY INTO A TWO-TIER OR BICAMERAL ARRANGEMENT FOR SOME OF ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES, SO THAT INFORMAL RESTRICTED MEETINGS PRECEDE -- AND INTER ALIA SERVE AS DE FACTO STEERING GROUPS FOR -- FORMAL PLENARIES.

4. THIRD, IN OUR JUDGMENT THE EXPERIENCE OF OECD IN THE LAST FEW YEARS HAS DEMONSTRATED REMARKABLE FLEXIBILITY IN ACCOMODATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF ITS MEMBERS BY SETTING UP NEW FORUMS AND MECHANISMS FOR STUDY, CONSULTATIONS AND OPERATIONS VIZ. THE MCCRACKEN GROUP, THE CIEC BACKSTOPPING MECHANISMS, THE IEA AS WELL AS THE BUREAUS REFERRED TO ABOVE. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THIS FORUM CAN BE FURTHER ADAPTED, AS NEEDED, AS LONG AS WE CAN DISPLAY FIRM U.S. LEADERSHIP AND PROCEED WITH SENSITIVITY TO THE CONCERNS OF OTHERS IN BUILDING THE NECESSARY POLITICAL CONSENSUS TO SET UP NEW OR ADAPT EXISTING STRUCTURES.

5. FOURTH, IN OUR EXPERIENCE THE PROBLEM OF SETTING UP RESTRICTED GROUPS IN THE OECD AND RELATED ECONOMIC CONTEXTS HAS ALMOST ALWAYS BEEN TIED IN CLOSELY WITH

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THE PROBLEM OF HOW THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IS TO BE REPRESENTED. AT ONE EXTREME IS THE EPC BUREAU WHERE ONLY THE LARGER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE REPRESENTED AND WHERE THE COMMISSION IS NOT PRESENT, REFLECTING ITS LACK OF INFLUENCE IN THIS FIELD. AT THE OTHER EXTREME IS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S RESTRICTED GROUP ON AGRICULTURE WHERE THE COMMISSION ALONE IS PRESENT AND NONE OF THE EC MEMBER COUNTRIES ARE REPRESENTED. IN BETWEEN ARE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT VARIANTS AS IN THE XCSS BUREAU AND THE G-6. THE POINT IS THAT IN FUTURE ADAPTATION OF OECD STRUCTURES IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE PROGRESS AND POLITICS OF THE COMMUNITY AND TO TAKE THE NECESSARY DIPLOMATIC SOUNDINGS SO AS TO SHAPE ANY NEW INITIATIVES WE MIGHT HAVE IN THE LIGHT OF THE BEST UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTERESTS OF THE VARIOUS PLAYERS IN THE
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COMMUNITY.

6. FIFTH, THE NEED HAS ARISEN FOR RESTRICTED GROUPS OUTSIDE OECD FRAMEWORK, BUT TAKING UP ESSENTIALLY THE SAME SUBJECTS E.G. THE G-6 IN THE AREA OF NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS. IN RECENT YEARS THE SECRETARIAT HAS SHOWN A REMARKABLE CAPACITY IN STAFFING THE NUMEROUS NEW ACTIVITIES LAUNCHED IN OECD, MAINLY AS A RESULT OF U.S. INITIATIVE. THE OECD SECRETARIAT'S CAPABILITIES COULD BE BROUGHT TO PLAY STILL MORE TO OUR ADVANTAGE IF FOR EXAMPLE THROUGH THE PRESENCE OF A MAN LIKE ELDIN AT G-6 MEETINGS THE SECRETARIAT CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY ASCERTAIN THE POLICY OBJECTIVES AND VIEWS OF THE KEY POLICY MAKERS FROM CAPITALS.

7. SIXTH AND FINALLY, THE USG SHOULD GIVE CONSIDER-ATION TO CLARIFYING THE RELATIONSHIP OF SPECIFIC OECD ACTIVITIES AND ESPECIALLY THE ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETINGS TO THE ECONOMIC SUMMITS WHICH NOW APPEAR TO BE A PERMANENT PART OF THE LANDSCAPE. A FORMAL LINK AS SEEMS TO BE CONTEMPLATED BY THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE FEASIBLE NOR NECESSARY. BUT WE SHOULD AT LEAST BE CLEAR IN OUR OWN MINDS AND AS APPROPRIATE DISCUSS WITH OTHER SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS THE RELATIONSHIP WE SEE BETWEEN VARIOUS OECD MEETINGS, THE XCSS, EPC, DAC AND IEA AND ESPECIALLY THE OECD MINISTERIAL AND THE SUMMIT BOTH IN TERMS OF PREPARING THE NECESSARY BASIC PAPERS, FORMING AN INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS OR SHARPENING THE ISSUES. OECD MEETINGS WHICH FOLLOW THE SUMMIT COULD ALSO BE USEFUL IN THE FOLLOW UP WORK AND IN ASSOCIATING A LARGER NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH THE MAIN THRUST OF THE SUMMIT CONCLUSIONS.
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